

# Support Letters

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I am Ellen's younger brother. It is no exaggeration to say that she is one of the most important people in my life, and the ways in which she has cared for and supported me are impossible to recount and impossible to repay. Ellen and I have many qualities that are polar opposites. She was always an example of how to overcome my most significant deficiencies. As a very shy, very quiet kid, I could always turn to her for guidance and protection, something that she still offered to me in circumstances where she had more than enough to deal with in her own life.

That care was steadfast, even when she almost certainly did not want to have me around. We had a rather unstable living situation growing up. My mom worked long hours. She would regularly be gone before I got up for school in the morning, and would come home too exhausted to deal with 3 kids. We had several babysitters over the years, but they did not really know how to provide support to a boy who barely spoke and antagonized them in myriad ways. Ellen was always there. She made sure I ate when no one else would. She made sure I made it to school. She talked to me and asked me about my thoughts and feelings when I had no one else. I was an easy target for elementary school bullies. A couple of kids in our neighborhood frequently harassed me by chasing after me, shooting BB pellets at me, cornering me, etc. I cannot count how many times she ran them off, coming to find me whenever she noticed me taking a little too long on a bike ride.

Ellen has never made that care conditional, never expressed how unfair it was that my burdens fell on her shoulders despite her being only three years my senior. Ellen has opened doors for me, helped foster relationships with teachers and peers that are still deeply impactful to me today. Without Ellen I would maybe never have been willing to open myself to others, to seek out joy and love, or even to cherish my own life.

Environmental advocacy has been something that Ellen and I have cared about since we were very young. I remember watching *An Inconvenient Truth* with her as a kid and marveling that people could have such an impact on a planet that was so much larger than what I knew. In high school, I joined an after school environmental student club that Ellen was president of for a few years. It flourished under her leadership and implemented many changes that directly improved the environmental impact of our school, as well as sponsoring activities to help us appreciate our world. One such activity was a 2 day scientific sailing trip in the Puget Sound. A small group of students accompanied a group of marine biologists surveying the flora and fauna present. We dissected the particular intricacies of the food web and the complex interactions of the creatures that call the sound home in a very direct way. I can trace my own care for the environment to the ways in which Ellen shared her own love for it with me.

That is why Ellen's crime is a drastic departure from the advocacy work she has done in the past. I know Ellen as someone who would spend hours and hours just to convince me how amazing and crucial a specific phytoplankton species is to the ecology of the Puget Sound. Her environmentalism has always been centered around sharing her love and wonderment with

anyone who would listen. Tampering with oil transport is a form of advocacy that centers fear and anger against those doing harm, and is diametrically opposed to the work she has done in the past. She's expressed as much to me: that she feels like helping people to understand and appreciate the world around them is what she wants to refocus her advocacy on.

To that end, Ellen has wasted no time wallowing in her present circumstances. She has maintained a steady employment and has spent much of her time this past year recentering herself. She has begun taking personal wellness and fitness steadfastly and seriously. I think in surprising ways her conviction has motivated her. She has always strived to be a force for positive change, for me and for so many others that have been lucky enough to know her.

Her conviction has also changed me. I had previously taken her presence in my life as a given. I have only recently really considered how foundational and transformative my relationship with her has been. She is the most amazing big sister I could ever wish for, and I mean to strengthen a relationship that means so much to me. We've been having weekly dinners for a while now. It is a way for me to express to her how much she matters. Even in something so mundane, it is making a difference in how I approach sustainability in my food consumption. Cooking with her has helped me learn to highlight and showcase ingredients that I wouldn't otherwise. My diet is not only healthier, but less processed, more local, and far less meat-centric than it used to be. That kind of personable, kind, and profound advocacy has been one of Ellen's hallmarks for as long as I have known her. I cannot wait to see how she continues from here.

Respectfully,  
Adam Reiche

12/1/21

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I have known Ellen Reiche for about 9 months, and I am writing to express my support. Since we met, Ellen and I have spent time together regularly in community as friends and neighbors, and we have also worked together in a professional setting.

When I first met Ellen, she was introduced by a mutual friend who knew of our shared interests and values. She wandered around my yard and we bonded over our shared enjoyment of delightful smells. As we got to know each other I was continually struck by the wonder and awe that Ellen exuded when talking about nature, plants, books, and ideas. We talked eagerly about our favorite authors and the philosophy of native and invasive plant species. She was clearly a kindred spirit with an open heart and mind. She shared openly and vulnerably about the challenges that she had met so far in life.

Ever since that first meeting I have enjoyed crossing paths with Ellen. She is spectacularly generous, genuine, playful, passionate, and wise. These qualities are present and palpable in every interaction, be it casual and passing or intentional and deep. Ellen has the ability to widen the horizons and deepen the beauty of any experience shared with another person. She is introspective and actively works on herself in mind and heart. She is also exquisitely interested in the world and expresses that through profound care and love. Ellen is full to the brim with fascinating facts about the planet and region we call home, and shares these with such humility and sparkle - it is impossible not to love life more fully when interacting with Ellen. I believe that she inspires people to act in greater integrity with their values, and to really interrogate the ways that we as humans could be living in greater harmony.

When I learned that Ellen had experience working with young people in nature, I was excited to invite her as a chaperone on a hike with my class of twenty 5th graders. On the day of our adventure, many of my students were elated to see their friend Ellen who they had known in previous outdoor education contexts.

The day was incredibly stormy, with heavy rain and continuous wind. Ellen's cheerful attitude and relentless enthusiasm kept my students engaged and happy throughout the soggy

journey. She shared with them knowledge deep and wide about the world of fungus, lichen, and plants. She led them in delightful games and challenges. In the days following the hike, I received emails from numerous parents thanking me for inviting Ellen on the trip, and sharing how much her contributions were appreciated by the students. Her professionalism and trustworthiness allowed me to be available to manage the overall logistics, and also to genuinely enjoy the time hiking with my students. Her presence was truly so supportive to me as a teacher and to the attitudes of my kids. I would love to invite her on future outings.

To conclude, I see Ellen wholeheartedly devoting herself to community and the environment, striving to grow as a person, and actively bringing goodness and beauty into the community and world. It is a gift to be in friendship with her. I believe that Ellen makes the world a better place, that she has immense goodness to offer to society, and that she has learned from and will continue to learn and grow from any mistakes she made in the past. I know that she looks toward the future with great intention to do right, and I have ultimate faith that she will succeed in this.

Thank you very much for taking these thoughts into consideration while determining Ellen's sentence. I am more than willing to stand by Ellen's side to support her in any way going forward.

Respectfully,

Alexandra Dumas

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I have been a close personal friend of Ellen Reiche since 2013 and I write this character reference letter to express my support. We first met at a concert shortly after I moved to Bellingham, when we were both 21 years old and students at Western Washington University. We became instant friends, and have been all but inseparable since then. Between 2014 and 2016, the years following Ellen's graduation from WWU, we were roommates and spent the majority of our free time together, whether cooking meals together, going to concerts, going out dancing, exploring nature and the city, or simply sitting on the front porch for hours talking about life. In all of these years, even as we mutually experienced the turbulent developmental stages of early adulthood, I have had a deep, abiding respect for Ellen as a loyal, compassionate, and honest human being.

To me, what best illustrates Ellen's depth of integrity and character are the ways in which she helped me through a series of personal crises I experienced shortly before moving away from Bellingham. First, I had recently moved out of the house we both lived in, and was financially unable to continue caring for my beloved cat Toby. Without question, she took over responsibility for Toby and still cares for him with the utmost love and diligence today. Frequently, when I didn't have enough money or health to feed myself, she was right there with some kind of delicious impromptu home-cooked soup or a pizza to share. When I had no transportation to work or medical appointments, she would step in to drive me where I needed to go. Shortly thereafter, I hit a rock bottom in my life, and began receiving harassment and threats from some of our mutual friends. Ellen proactively intervened at great personal risk to de-escalate the situation. At her suggestion, she hosted and mediated a face-to-face conversation between myself and my harasser to see if we could find a peaceful solution to our conflict. When even her compassionate, reasoned effort failed, she continued to protect and defend me. I was at the brink of suicide, quite frankly, and Ellen's unwavering emotional and material support showed me enough hope and love to inspire my will to live. It is no exaggeration to say I owe her my life in many tangible ways.

Our friendship has continued despite living far apart for the last few years, and although we may not have been sharing our daily lives so intimately, I have had the privilege of seeing Ellen truly come into her own as we entered our late 20's. From building community social groups, her enthusiasm for skiing, cycling, and jiu jitsu, learning to play the drums, to beginning a career in environmental education, it's always been a delight to catch up over the phone and have the occasional night out together dancing in Seattle or having dinner at her home. Her work as an environmental educator for a local nonprofit was where I witnessed Ellen's talent for mentorship and love for all life truly blossom. Over the years she was employed there, she led countless after-school nature walks for



K-12 children, and later on, overnight backpacking trips for teenagers near Mount Baker. When she told me about the joys, rewards, frustrations, and inspirations of this work, it was abundantly clear that her young mentees and their families adored, trusted, and respected her, and that she felt the same for them. When the COVID-19 pandemic put these programs on indefinite hiatus, some of these families even personally hired her to tutor their children and continue outdoor educational excursions for their homeschooling pod.

After this background and retelling of my personal experiences with Ellen as one of the most important people in my life, it should not be surprising to the court to hear of my extreme shock one afternoon in late November 2020 when a mutual friend called me to ask if I'd read the news reports about Ellen's arrest a few days earlier. In part my shock was simply because one rarely anticipates, expects, or experiences this kind of news, but mostly because the coverage of her arrest and the pending charges were so completely at odds with the person I know so well and have always trusted with my life. I have always known Ellen to be a non-violent person, who I've often found to be a moral compass over the years—never lacking in either empathy or gentle correction when I need them most.

I have never directly asked Ellen whether she committed the offense or not, or why she committed it. I honestly avoided that specific conversation, even when we were discussing the case. At first, I did not ask because I gave her the full benefit of the doubt and didn't want to potentially endanger her legal case, but I have not broached that subject directly even after the jury returned their guilty verdict. This leaves me with speculation, well-informed by my knowledge of her character, as to her potential motives. I feel confident in calling this offense a one-off, deeply misguided attempt at disrupting the movement of fossil fuels through Whatcom County (which, somewhat ironically, recently became the first county in the United States to unanimously pass a measure banning the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure). Ellen is an environmentalist, it's true. So am I. This spring I will graduate with a dual bachelor's degree in Ecology and Sustainability; conserving and restoring ecosystems in our age of grave environmental destruction is the call that matters most to me, and she shares that value. I can say with absolute certainty that Ellen has never wished to intentionally harm another living being. Environmental destruction or human harm, especially in the community she loves so much, are the last things she'd ever want to happen, convincing me that her actions are an aberration that she will never repeat. Additionally, Ellen has never once tried to defend, minimize, excuse, or explain away her actions to me, even as I consistently have allowed our conversations leading up to the trial to remain strictly within the realm of reasonable doubt. She is someone who takes true accountability for her mistakes.

Over this last year, Ellen has expressed impressive grace, strength, and hopefulness to me that I admit I'd be hard-pressed to find within myself if our situations were reversed. Since her arrest, she has been faithfully abiding by her release conditions and doing volunteer and paid work (currently she's leading activities at a local high school, babysitting, and working in a boatyard). She already speaks of goals and dreams beyond the unknown consequences that await after sentencing. Although it's unclear which avenues will remain open to her, she hopes to learn from her mistakes and perhaps return to environmental education. Regardless of the outcome, I know that she will find a wonderful way to continue sharing her gifts of mentorship, care, and curiosity with her family, friends, and wider community. Each step of the way, we will be there to support and guide.

I was one of the many supporters you saw sitting on the defendant's side of the courtroom during the trial. There are many supporters who couldn't make it to Seattle who called me for updates during breaks and afterwards. Most of them I've known for almost as long as I've known Ellen. We were all there in person or in spirit because Ellen has been a pillar of strength in all of our lives, both in our times of need and our times of plenty. Who would we be if we didn't do what she would do for us? We traveled to Seattle from all around the state and country to see the same humanity and goodness in her as she sees in all people. Her misguided actions are no reason for anyone to see her as any less than I know her to be.

Thank you, Your Honor, for taking my thoughts and experiences into consideration as you deliberate on the appropriate sentence.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ali Bailey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "A" and "B".

Ali Bailey



To whom it may concern:

My name is Andy, to give a little insight of what I do in the Whatcom community, I work in a community action agency as a Case Manager that serves Homeless Veterans in our community through assisting in their mental and behavioral health by means of wrap-around services and a 'housing first model'.

To give a whole perspective of how I see Ellen I will share my experiences with her.

I met Ellen when I first moved to Whatcom County about 3 years ago, at a community event for youth in Bellingham. Ellen was distributing information for a nature connection program that she was an educator/mentor at, having also been a nature mentor for youth at the time I thought it would be beneficial for us to stay in contact. Ellen and I swapped stories of our passion in mentoring youth through a nature connection model. My impression then is the same as it is now, Ellen is very committed to educating youth in how to be kind, respectful humans to the earth, animals, to each other and to themselves.

The next time I saw Ellen was at an event for Indigenous people of Whatcom County. A Lummi elder was teaching their language and culture with the Whatcom Community. Ellen showed how respectful she is of the Indigenous community here in Whatcom by listening to the elders' stories and participating in the meeting. The elder was familiar with Ellen and it was apparent this was not her first time attending a gathering intended to show respect and honor to the Indigenous and elders of Whatcom County.

Later on Ellen and I went hiking and spoke a lot about how much we love nature and want peace and harmony for nature and community. Throughout the hike Ellen had a gentle and calm demeanour about her. We also practiced nature skills while on the hike such as tracking and plant identification. In my opinion, knowing how much time and energy a person has dedicated to deeply knowing and understanding the natural world around them is a great indicator of their caring and nurturing personality.

Most recently, I invited Ellen to try out a martial art called jujitsu at Bellingham Jujitsu Academy on Holly St. Jujitsu is known as the "gentle martial art" also referred to as "human chess" because it has more to do with thoughtfulness, strategy, patience, calmness and respect than any other martial art, and it focuses on technique and mental focus more than any other martial art. Ellen is always welcoming new faces at the academy, offering support and guidance to new members. You can usually find Ellen helping clean up the gym after class by sweeping and mopping the mats. Ellen has been a fantastic training partner, she is always respectful, careful and humble while training—it is very apparent that Ellen is a safe person to practice this martial art with.

Ever since I have known Ellen she has proven to be of service to Whatcom County through her work as a mentor to youth, through her involvement with the indigenous community, through her care taking of Whatcom County's environment, and lastly she is of service through the way she interacts with others at Bellingham BJJ.

Ellen is a kind, compassionate, empathetic, centered and grounded person. Therefore I was very surprised to hear about the crime Ellen has been accused of as it is at odds with

everything I know of her and have experienced with her.

Ellen does not portray any criminal behavior or mind set, quite the opposite, Ellen is an amazing community member. A community member of Whatcom County and of the larger natural world, giving value, inspiration, connection and kindness to all she encounters—thus representing Whatcom County as the place I know and love, a place where I feel belonging and acceptance—and Ellen has been a key element in forming that feeling.

—With honesty and respect,  
*Andy VanArsdale*

The Honorable Ricardo S. Martinez  
United States District Court, Western District of Washington  
United States Courthouse  
700 Stewart Street, Suite 13134  
Seattle, WA 98101-9906

Dear Judge Martinez:

I am Ellen Reiche's sister, Annie. I am writing this letter to express my support of my sister and communicate what I know to be true of Ellen's character. This letter has been difficult for me to complete as there are so many things I would like to say about Ellen and what she means to me. My relationship with my sister has always been extremely important to me. Although Ellen may live far away from me as I write this, she has always been a huge figure in my life.

As my older sister, born 8 years before myself, Ellen has always been there for me. At a young age, she was tasked with a huge responsibility: that of taking care of her younger siblings, including my brother, to the degree of a stay-at-home parent. We had a single mom who worked long hours in Seattle, and when she came home she had hardly any energy to deal with three kids on her own. Ellen sacrificed a lot of her own childhood and freedom to take care of my brother and me. Not only did she sacrifice all that, but by no stretch were we easy to take care of (what kids are?). Then add the context that Ellen and my brother's father was not really in the picture (he lives in California and visits semi-annually). We did not have family in the local area and no support systems to rely on. It was just us. This lasted for years. It was burdensome and made Ellen rightfully resentful of what she had missed out on. During all this hardship, Ellen was striving to finish high school while taking multiple college-level courses so that she could go to college and move out of home. Ellen worked extremely hard to complete these goals while everything in her life was working against her. She is one of the most formidable people I have ever met. You can guarantee that if Ellen has a goal, she will meet it, come hell or high water. I have no idea how Ellen was able to do all she did during this time, it truly seems impossible looking back on it. She didn't just learn to survive, she learned to thrive. She found her people, her own support network outside her family, and was able to see a light at the end of the tunnel. And she just kept pushing forward.

Ellen left home at 18 and continued to thrive. She attended Western Washington University and studied German, something she had always been keen on. She is practically fluent now and it is awesome to see. Outside of school, Ellen found inspiration from within our own family to pursue work in the outdoors, something she had already experimented with in high school by working at our local state park. She took after our dear aunt and uncle who work as ski instructors in Utah. Ellen worked as a ski instructor for many seasons on Crystal and Baker Mountain. Ellen excelled in this position, gaining more experience and qualifications every season. She always maintains the best part of the job is working with the kids. The experience of teaching someone and seeing them try and finally succeed is one of the most fulfilling parts of life for Ellen. She loves learning and teaching more than most people I know. It is part of her core values. She is always trying to grow and become something better.

She went on to work in an outdoor program with kids after university. Once again, Ellen found the sweet spot between learning and teaching. She loves the outdoors and it is important to her that she can help people also learn to love and care for it. She's always telling me about a new plant she learned about, or something I would've never known about native land conservation. Or she's telling me about how awesome her kids are, and how I just wouldn't believe how fun they are to be around. She is so enthusiastic about life and it is truly infectious. Any world without her would be a worse world.

While living in Bellingham, Ellen found many people she now considers family. She found incredible life-long friends and a community she thrives in. She participates and contributes to her local community and loves doing so. She often volunteers for local homeless shelters, and although it is hard work, she finds it very fulfilling because she knows she is making a real difference in someones life. I have always admired how present Ellen is in her life. I tend to be very introverted at times and avoid the world. She interacts with the world she lives in every day and makes it better.

One thing I want to include is what Ellen means to me now. You know what she meant to me in childhood, and how I admire how she chooses to live her life. But who she truly is; that is something special and difficult to describe. Ellen is insanely emotionally intelligent. She journals every day, sometimes for hours, first thing when she wakes up. She has lived a lot of life in not so many years. I wouldn't call her an old soul, because her energy is so bright and expansive and young. She teaches me something every time I speak to her. She teaches me something about her, but more often myself. She has a way of breaking any walls you may be holding up. She digs deep, because she cares. She fights hard, because she loves hard. She is an incredible person to have in your life. She challenges you in ways that always make you better. She truly cares about this world and the people in it. Not many people do. This is who she is. She cannot stand still. She must grow. She must move onward. I love her so much.

I know Ellen regrets the decision she made. This is not because of the consequences of arrest, trial, or sentencing. Ellen regrets that she did not know about the potential outcomes of her actions. Had she known there was any possibility of harm of any kind, she absolutely would not have done what she did. I can also attest that Ellen will never again act in any way that could cause such potential harm. I urge you to consider Ellen's character as testimony for who she truly is, and can continue to become.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Marie Hansen', with a stylized, flowing script.

Anne Marie Hansen



**From:** Benjamin Schieber [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 1, 2021 8:34 PM  
**To:** Jesse Cantor <Jesse\_Cantor@fd.org>  
**Subject:** Character Letter for Ellen Reiche

Dear Judge Martinez,

This past weekend I was lucky enough to work side by side with Ellen for the first time in over a year. I was reminded of her deep and abiding love of the natural world, and her incredible skills as an educator and naturalist.

I met Ellen three years ago when I was hired onto an outdoor education nonprofit where Ellen was by that point an established and beloved mentor. I was immediately impressed by her ability to connect with the youth we served. I have never once seen Ellen treat a child as anything less than an entire, nuanced human being, and she strives in every action to uphold their agency, validate their emotions and perspectives and ensure their physical and emotional safety. Particularly impressive to me is that this prevailing grace excludes no one. I've seen Ellen draw students who are expressing hateful or violent thoughts into compassionate explorations of their ideals. Even as she is being insulted she never loses sight of the person behind the words and remains committed to reaching that other soul. I wish often that I had had an educator of Ellen's caliber in my life as a child.

I was and am equally impressed with Ellen's appreciation and understanding of nature. The living world is not just a scientific or recreational object to Ellen. She is in a constant and contagious state of awe at every living thing. I've watched her infect a group of students with enthusiasm for salmon, orcas, deer, cedars, but she also takes the time to marvel at the lowliest slime moulds, insects and even the soil itself.

This ability to deeply love both her fellow humans and the world around us makes Ellen an absolutely unparalleled educator. I believe it was also what led her to take actions against fossil fuel infrastructure last year. I saw first hand while working with Ellen how the terror and uncertainty of the pandemic, unrest and election turmoil of 2020 wore on her. She often expressed that she felt she was unable to do enough, and despite assurances that her work was a valuable and positive force in the world, I believe she felt more drastic measures were needed. She's told me multiple times since then that she wished she had focused instead on her work with students and with the homeless community. She lost her position at the nonprofit we work for due to her actions, and her sudden absence and the changes to community that came with it left a deep impression on every student and mentor that worked with her.

Last weekend I was overjoyed to see her back in the saddle. She works now for the Washington Trails Association: directly improving the infrastructure that allows her community to experience the wonders of the outdoors. More specifically, she leads work parties, teaching youth the techniques of trail maintenance.

I saw an enthusiastic recommitment to positive change, to education and nurture and new communities. I have no doubt that Ellen has understood that the way to protect the world she loves so much is to foster that love in the hearts of her students and coworkers. It is a task she is extremely good at.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts and deep affection for Ellen and I am committed to returning the years of support, friendship and community she has shared with me.

Benjamin



11/1/2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez, U.S. District Judge

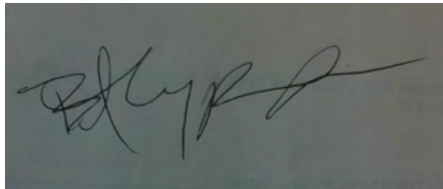
I have known Ellen Reiche since 2017 when I was her supervisor for the Washington State Parks. I was on the panel that interviewed her for the position and I was the one that offered the job. I also made the reference calls to previous employers for Ellen before we offered the job and I was given high recommendations by the employers I spoke with. Ellen was a great team member for our summer season. She worked long and rigorous days to care for our public lands and enhance the visitor experience to the parks. She picked things up quickly and took very good care of the equipment and property.

I have stayed in touch with Ellen after our working season and we have become good friends as we continue to be connected through outdoor advocacy groups. I know Ellen cares deeply about the natural world and sharing that love with others. I have watched Ellen continue to elevate her skills in the environmental education sector and she infuses care and respect for the earth back into her community that she loves. She has been grounded in her passion for spreading environmental knowledge and skills to the youth of western Washington. We have also spent many hours hiking in the woods and discussing spirituality and Zen Buddhism. I believe that this crime is out of character for Ellen.

Ellen expressed her remorse to me soon after she was arrested and how she knew what she did was wrong. I saw sincere disappointment in her actions that fell out of line with the way she shows up for her community. I don't believe she will do it again because she knows how her talents are needed to serve the youth in the community to connect with nature. I have all the faith in Ellen that she will call on me if there is a dilemma of ethical actions and we can find healthy ways to approach a problem. I believe that Ellen's future will move forward in a positive way because she has established roots in the environmental community in Bellingham. Ellen is a valuable asset to the ever important environmental education effort to help people care for the land they live on.

Please consider my word and bond that Ellen Reiche is deserving of my highest regards.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bethany Rennaker', is written on a light-colored background.

Bethany Rennaker



11/28/2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

My name is Brel Froebe and I am writing to you to provide a character reference for Ellen Reiche. I've had the privilege of working with Ellen in a variety of community contexts, and I can say without exaggeration that she is one of the most compassionate and generous people I've ever worked with. I first met Ellen last fall in a homeless encampment. We were both volunteering there multiple times a week. Ellen took it upon herself to provide emergency first aid and crisis support to a number of people who were experiencing medical and mental health emergencies. To see Ellen in action is to witness someone that possesses important emergency medical skills, but also a rare gift for how to make people who are suffering feel less panicked. Her calm presence deescalated many situations that could have resulted in harm to others, but her ability to peacefully talk to people and get their basic needs met was inspiring to witness. Ellen also went out of her way to mentor some homeless youth who needed extra support. She would do everything from take them to doctor's appointments to help them look for jobs. But most importantly she was a role model for these struggling youth who looked to her for how to begin living a more stable and meaningful life.

I've also been lucky enough to see Ellen work with high school students. Ellen works part time at the Whatcom Intergenerational High School, a small public charter high school in Bellingham, WA. She leads morning classes that teach youth social/emotional learning skills, as well as history. Students look forward to this morning time, because Ellen is incredibly skilled at helping students who may be struggling to get into the right mindset to be successful in school. She also takes students out on weekly environmental education experiences. Students love being around Ellen because of her calm, fun, and connecting presence. She is one of the most skilled environmental educators I've ever met, and I don't know of any other teachers at the school who could replace her.

I understand Ellen has been convicted of a crime, and from my experience of her, I know in my heart that Ellen is someone that learns from her mistakes and is willing to take accountability when she is wrong. I believe that Ellen would not commit a crime again, because she realizes that she has so many incredible gifts to offer her community, and to take actions that would jeopardize that would not only negatively impact her, but her entire community. As her co-worker and friend, I know that Ellen has a support network around her that can help her stay on track and not repeat any past mistakes. Lastly, from my experience working with Ellen in our community, I can say with confidence that she has absolutely no intention to hurt or cause harm to others.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter. I deeply hope that you will take everything I've relayed to you into account during sentencing, as she plays a very important role in many teenagers' and vulnerable community members' lives.

Sincerely,



Brel Froebe

December 3rd, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez;

I have known Ellen as a fellow student, a coworker, a friend and community member. In the 8 years of knowing Ellen, the constant thread I have seen is that Ellen shows up. She shows up with her raucous laughter, big smile and even bigger heart to celebrate life's big and small moments. She shows up with her focused, compassionate attention for the struggles of friends and community members alike. My life, and my community within Bellingham is better because of the profound ways Ellen shows up in our lives.

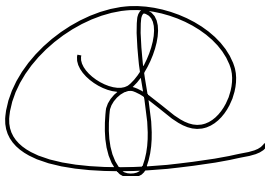
Almost 6 years ago exactly, my partner Jon and I moved into a trailer to save on rent while we undertook major renovations and repairs on our current home. Ellen showed up with a warm, "are-you-sure-that's-not-cheese" vegan casserole to celebrate. Ellen showed up for our dream of our own home, and literally fed us and nurtured us on our way there.

A couple of years later, I had the good fortune of being coworkers with Ellen. We worked for a whale watching company that half way through the summer season had lost the patience and good will of the entire staff due to mismanagement and understaffing. Ellen was hired at the end of her season working for the Parks Department on Orcas Island and showed up in the nick of time. Ellen, with her can-do attitude, breathed new life into our workplace. Ellen was enthusiastic, meticulous, and a hard worker. Ellen could have allowed herself to get mired down in the company's dramas but instead she showed up and got the job done with a diligence and focus that comes from within. My partner, Jon and I now run a boat repair company and were so impressed by Ellen's work ethic that we hired her this year, and would absolutely hire her back as soon as we are able.

From what I have seen, Ellen is diligent and focused in all facets of her life. Ellen works hard on herself, on her profession and for her community. Ellen shares that hard work with her community freely and with humility. For example Ellen shares her skills as a Wilderness First Aid Responder by volunteering with many different communities during events or crises. Through this trail I have gotten to know more of Ellen's communities and family, and I know the absence of Ellen's big heart and hard work will be felt by all of us.

Thank you, your Honor, for taking these thoughts into consideration as you deliberate Ellen's sentence.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chelsea Thaw'. The signature is stylized with a large, loopy 'C' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Chelsea Thaw



November 24, 2021

Mr. Jesse Cantor  
1601 Fifth Ave, Set 700  
Seattle WA 98101

Mr. Cantor:

We are Ellen Reiche's aunt and uncle. We spent a considerable amount of time with Ellen during her childhood and young adulthood, both in her home and in our home. Ellen and her family (mother, brother, and half sister) visited us in Mexico, Dubai, and India, and we typically spent a few weeks with her family during our summer vacations in the United States. We invited Ellen to spend her gap year with us in Mumbai and found an internship for her, an opportunity she ultimately decided not to pursue.

Ellen has always been a passionate supporter of the environment and those who society overlooks. In high school she was president of the environment club and honed her argumentation skills on the debate team. She was raised as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and was a willing participant in camping and other outdoor youth activities sponsored by the church. Her summer job involved clearing brush and maintaining a state park. Her passion for the environment has continued in adulthood with her prior work at a Bellingham non-profit that guides wilderness tours for youth. During college Ellen became a fervent supporter of LGBTQ rights and has since identified very closely with issues affecting that community. She identifies as queer and has organized events and outreach activities for the Bellingham LGBTQ community. In recent years, Ellen has become an ardent supporter of indigenous rights.

Ellen is exceptionally bright, and we expected her to seek to better the world by pursuing a career in law or environmental science. Instead, lacking the credentials to effect systemic change, she chose a more ad hoc approach to pursuing social justice. Ellen's activism has helped her mature as an adult and led her to be accepting of people from all walks of life, including those with whom she disagrees. This acceptance of others comprises a significant part of her outlook on life. Hence, while we were surprised by the actions that precipitated her arrest, we do not believe that she would intentionally harm someone.

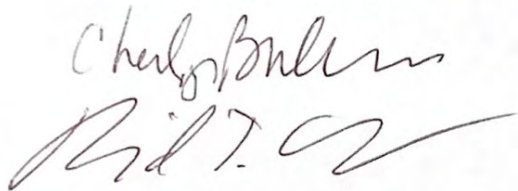
We live in an era when those who are seeking a sense or purpose can fall prey to online purveyors of extremism, tribalism, and propaganda. In the relative safety of the online world, people are susceptible to calls for civil disobedience, rebellion, and resistance to a variety of causes. However, when the ire and indignation that is developed online spreads to the real world, the results can be quite dangerous, even lethal. Current examples include Q-Anon believers, the thousands of anti-vaxxers who are dying weekly of Covid-19, members of illegal militias, January-6 insurrectionists, and spreaders of the recent election's "Big Lie." Similarly, we observed young people in

Portland and Seattle who, while claiming to be advancing civil rights, caused considerable damage and mayhem. While the evolution of extremism appears to be primarily a right-wing phenomenon, we also know that young people on the left are being similarly affected by easy access to propaganda.

Our sense is that this experience will help Ellen to steer clear of extreme advocacy, focussing her future activism on more constructive and effective means of promoting change. We hope that the judge will consider these factors during Ellen's sentencing.

Sincerely,

Cherilyn and David Williams

The block contains two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature, "Cheryl Williams", is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right. The second signature, "David Williams", is also in cursive and is positioned below the first, with a similar long horizontal line.



Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I have known Ellen Reiche for 3 years, in both personal and professional capacities, and am writing today to express my support for her. Ellen is a beloved member of my Bellingham community, and a valued member of the trail maintenance staff team at Washington Trails Association (WTA). Ellen and I first met at a workshop for teen educators, hosted by a local non-profit. We quickly bonded over our shared passion for outdoor education and working with young people, and kept in touch regularly as peers in the realm of education and youth work.

Since connecting professionally three years ago, Ellen and I have also become friends. We play music together, attend the weekly community bike ride, and nerd out on flora and fauna at the beach. This past summer, I had the pleasure of serving as Ellen's supervisor after she was hired to lead multi-day camping and trail work trips at WTA for teenage volunteers. Throughout the summer, Ellen was a leader amongst her peers in risk management practices, and was a valuable source of feedback and support for the other crew leaders. She also received amazing feedback from her students and their families, such as:

- "Our leaders were really excellent, and I particularly appreciated [Ellen's] positive stewardship. She was able to interest the girls in many different aspects of what we were doing..." - Girl Scout troop organizer
- "Ellen is a great educator! She was really great at working with young adults and providing specific and thorough instructions as well as delegating tasks. Despite having very unclear trail work projects at times, she was able to manage this group of young adults and make sure everyone had a role and something to contribute." -WTA staff co-leader on one of Ellen's trips

Ellen was completely transparent with WTA about her charges when applying for her job. After interviewing Ellen and discussing the charges with her, and then proceeding with our internal review process, we were thrilled to extend Ellen an offer to join our team working teens for the summer. Throughout the months leading up to the trial, Ellen continued to perform excellent quality work for WTA and never missed a commitment or requirement for the role. Despite the personal emotional strain she was under this summer, she really showed up for the teens and made sure that everyone was safe, had fun, and got some good work done. I was truly impressed with her generosity and commitment to youth work throughout this process, and deeply admire that she kept showing up to serve the community even while having a very challenging time personally leading up to the trial.

After such high quality of work this summer, WTA extended Ellen's employment into 2022, and I've continued to serve as Ellen's supervisor. Ellen continues to lead youth and their families in completing volunteer trail work on public lands, such as Larrabee State Park and King County Parks. Having Ellen continue working with us this fall has opened up so many more opportunities for WTA to achieve our mission of Trails for Everyone, Forever - we've been able to double the number of volunteer opportunities we're offering this fall and winter. Ellen continues to regularly receive positive feedback, including this comment in her seasonal review: "As a Trail Crew Leader - YVV, Ellen met all expectations of the role and was a supportive and thoughtful teammate. As her supervisor, I appreciated the trust I could place in her to solve problems in the field in a way that aligns with WTA's risk management philosophy and values. I'm also grateful for the thoughtful feedback she provided below regarding program improvements. I would enthusiastically recommend her for re-hire in this role, or other similar roles at WTA, in the future."

As a fellow educator, youth program manager, and Ellen's supervisor, I've seen first-hand the positive impact she has in the lives of young people and their families. As her friend, I've seen how community-focused she has remained since being charged last year. Ellen is a good person, a dear friend, and a valued employee - I truly think the world is a better place with her in it. After Ellen serves her sentence, I will be here - along with so many other members of her community - to welcome her home, and support her in resuming her life's work with teens. Thank you, Your Honor, for taking these thoughts into consideration as you deliberate on the appropriate sentence.

Respectfully,



Youth Trail Program Manager at Washington Trails Association

October 30, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I have had the pleasure of knowing Ellen for almost four years now. We met in 2018 when we were both working for Outer Island Excursions, a whale watching and nature tour company based in Anacortes, Washington. I worked as a captain and Ellen was often my deckhand, meaning we worked closely together many days of the week. We depended on each other for both the safety of our tours and the entertainment of passengers and got to know each other well during that time. Ellen was consistently reliable, fun to work with, energetic, and very knowledgeable about the area. The tour goers absolutely loved her, especially children and youth. It was inspiring to see her connect with people of all backgrounds and share information on the amazing wildlife, plants, geology, and culture of the Salish Sea, inspiring them to take care of their environment. We quickly became friends and keep in touch to this day.

Since working with Ellen four years ago, I have moved to Washington, DC and visit Washington state when I can. Ellen and I keep in touch when we're apart and always meet up when I am in town. I know that she is a pillar in her community as a youth mentor and many others besides myself consider her to be a close friend and important person in our lives.

I have always known Ellen to act with integrity and dependability and she has had a positive influence on the lives of so many people around her. I hope that a temporary lapse in her judgment does not prevent her from contributing to the lives of friends and community she is part of.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can provide any more information or support for Ellen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Demi M. Gary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Demi Gary

A black rectangular redaction box covering contact information, likely a phone number and email address.

Dear Honourable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

My name is Emily Forrette. I am a 22 year old autistic woman from Bellingham, WA, and have been Ellen's roommate since November of 2020, her friend since September of 2020. In the short time that I've known her Ellen has become an essential part of my life, a pillar support system for therapy, and an invaluable guide for my self-improvement and healing as an autistic woman recovering from childhood neglect and abuse.

In all the time I've known her, I have never known Ellen to be anything but empathetic, accountable, and forward thinking. Even amidst the stress of her trial she has managed to be a consummate friend to me and everyone around her. When I attempted (and failed to complete) suicide on February 29th Ellen was the first person I felt I could talk to and rely on to guide me through recovery, coaching me on how to prepare if my therapist recommended inpatient treatment. When my abusive parents insisted on coming to our house even without my consent, Ellen ensured she would have the day off from work and kept herself freely available to intervene if things went awry. And even now after a verdict was reached Ellen has continued to commit herself to supporting myself and everyone in our household. Forever the pillar of reliability in our home.

To lose Ellen in the face of sentencing this winter would be more than losing a roommate and friend. It would be losing the person who constantly encouraged me to get back into the outdoors. Who helped me perfect my grounding strategies that keep me calm and focused. Who helped me remember how I loved poetry, why I wanted to learn German, encouraged me to try guitar and gave me reassurance as I practiced. This is a person I have picked a christmas tree with, gone clothes shopping with. Someone who's come to jump my car battery in rain when no one else would. Ellen is more than a roommate and friend, she is a person who encourages and, I feel, genuinely cares for me. Ellen is like family, and I haven't felt like I've had that in quite some time. Ellen brings so much light and dedication into the life of everyone she meets, and though sometimes grumpy and scolding (almost sisterly in its own way), she is an integral part of my life.

I've never known Ellen to be violent, to act without truly weighing the consequences, or to hurt others without dwelling over it for long after. I truly believe her to be a kind hearted and good person, and that whatever actions described in court were the exception, not the rule. It's my hope that my words may help you to see Ellen as I see her, as a friend and loved one, and that it might inform your judgement.

Thank you dearly for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Forrette', with a stylized, flowing script.

Emily Lovejoy Forrette

Eric Underwood

Oct. 22, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez, U.S. District Judge,

I am Eric Underwood, a 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher for Seattle Public Schools, writing to express advocacy for Ellen Reiche's character to support her sentencing trial.

Ellen has been one of my closest friends since middle school. During that time, I was subjected to an abusive environment due to prejudice against how I was born. Ellen was there for me, uplifting me with her loving friendship and supporting me when I needed it most. Her kindness and understanding helped me realize that I am deserving of love, that I can lead a life worth living full of joy and excitement for who I am and the world. Ellen helped me grow into a version of myself I love.

As I got to know Ellen over the years, what stands out to me most is how she operates from a place of genuine love and care for herself and others. These values empower her kindness and understanding, forming close connections to family, friends, and people in her community.

This community centers mutual support and growth. We continually learn and grow from and with each other, helping each other become the best versions of ourselves. This co-development involves mutual accountability between loved ones, and Ellen models what that looks like. When Ellen makes mistakes, she actively learns from them with an intentionality that speaks to her values. Ellen is never one to make the same mistake twice because she is a capable learner and changes behavior to ensure that mistake would not happen again. I have utmost faith that returning to the community Ellen would never again transgress.

I observed this pattern of community connection continue when I visited Ellen in college. There she developed a close relationship with outdoors education and worked as a ski instructor and for Wild Whatcom. As a high school teacher and from previous experience, I know that "informal" education can be some of the most demanding work, as it lacks school structures to support pedagogy and behavioral management. In these contexts, Ellen engaged her values of love and care for community by dedicatedly supporting the growth and development of youth. Outdoor education is particularly effective in fostering a close relationship with the environment, which ties us all together by centering sustainability for all life on Earth. Ellen is a valuable member of the community through this difficult and important contribution to the health and wellbeing of the next generation and the planet.

Effective education requires the teacher to live out the values they espouse, and in this outdoor education context Ellen leaned into her care, love for others and the environment, and drive for personal and community growth. It was this love for the environment that misguidedly inspired her crime, which was out of character for who she is. Ellen would never intentionally hurt others because of her guiding values of love and care. Her values empower me with full confidence to

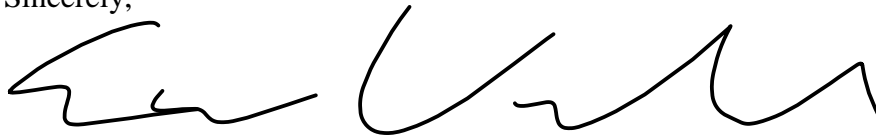
posit Ellen has and will continue to learn and grow from her transgression, never again to commit such a crime.

As a close friend in Ellen's community, I am committed to ongoing personal support of her growth and wellbeing. I will continually love and grow alongside her, discussing behavior and mistakes to learn from and reframe them to inspire positive change. I will partner with her in healthy ways to demonstrate care for the environment and ways to advocate for it that protect the safety and wellbeing of all.

Ellen is an asset to the community. She is a loving and caring friend, daughter, sister, and educator, and I believe her transgression was out of character and something she will never repeat.

Thank you, Your Honor, for considering my advocacy of Ellen's character for her sentencing trial. I will offer further support to Ellen as required.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Underwood', with a stylized, cursive script.

Eric Underwood





The Honorable Ricardo S. Martinez  
United States District Court, Western District of Washington  
United States Courthouse  
700 Stewart St. Suite 13134  
Seattle WA 98101

Your Honor,

I am Ellen Reiche's father. Though circumstances and choices have made living nearby to her difficult, to say the least, I feel we have always had a relationship of caring, honesty and understanding. I can say that Ellen is not a fragmented person. She is not one way to some persons and a different way with others. Not that she is simple or superficial, the opposite is true. She is genuine. She embodies her values and beliefs and concerns, without guile or hypocrisy. She has not come to this easily; it's been a lifelong process for her.

I know Ellen as a person with a strong sense of justice, a strong sense of concern and care for others, and a palpable kindness towards every person, and especially towards those who are not treated justly or with kindness by the society at large. She has those feelings not just for people, but for all creatures, and the local and global environment. I am proud of her for becoming this way.

While she brings intensity and energy to those feelings, I have never known her to be violent or aggressive about them; I believe that would be inconsistent with her core and how she lives.

Thank goodness there were no harmful consequences of that night's events to anyone except Ellen and Sam. In particular, no harm came to any persons. Had Ellen known about or considered the possible consequences of what she was convicted of, I am certain she would not have chosen to risk the train crews' safety, or the safety of any persons living near the tracks. I am certain she would not have chosen to risk an environmental catastrophe. Whatever her motivations, I do not believe she intended harm to anyone or any thing. That is not the life path she was on. She has only and ever been involved in trying to change the world and people for the better.

This may sound self-deceptive on my part, being that I am her father. I confess I don't have much clarity about this case. I was present during the trial, and heard everything the jury did. But I don't know what actually happened the night Ellen and Sam were arrested. I don't know why they were there or what they intended and perhaps never will; that was never established in the trial as far as I know. But that is all moot; they were convicted of the charges and are living with the lifelong consequences.

In the face of this, I have no doubt Ellen herself now has clarity about these consequences. This is witnessed by how she has accepted them with grace and resolution, and without despair or rancor. I cannot imagine she intends on criminal actions in the future. I believe rather that Ellen will consider more carefully what the risks of any actions may be, not just to her but to others too. Of course you have guidelines that should be followed in sentencing. But I do not believe a harsh or lengthy sentence will reinforce the point any better. Rather, it will deprive the community and people who benefit from her energy and care and kindness.

Thank you for your attention.

Greg H. Reiche  
December 3, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I am Ellen's uncle Jeff and have known her for 20 years. I have spent a lot of time with her enjoying life through outdoor recreation like skiing, river rafting, camping, hiking, and sailing.

Ellen is always fun to be with because of her positive attitude towards life, nature, and people. She is a person with a great amount of character, energy, and love. She is eager to show to others her enthusiasm for life. Ellen is very thoughtful and intelligent and she and I have had very meaningful and honest discussions about many interesting and important issues. Ellen's ability to respect others and learn from their perspective is unique. She cares deeply for people and is accepting of others.

Ellen is a beloved member of my family and a true friend. The world needs more people like her and is better for her being a part of it. My belief is that Ellen's presence in society will benefit the community around her.

Thank you for reading this. I hope it gives you insight into Ellen's true character.

Jeff Haymond

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Haymond", written over a thin horizontal line.

The Honorable Ricardo S. Martinez  
United States District Court, Western District of Washington  
United States Courthouse  
700 Stewart Street, Suite 13134  
Seattle, WA 98101-9906

Kind Sir -

I am Ellen Reiche's mother. I am writing this letter to provide my support to and express my love and admiration for Ellen. I have struggled to write this letter because there is so much I want you to know about Ellen, her character, her passions and ambitions. It's difficult to distill all this into a letter and feel that I have done the topics any justice.

For some background, I'd like you to know a little about Ellen's home life. I was a very young unwed mother when Ellen was born. Ellen's father, Greg and I married when Ellen was about 2 years old, then separated and eventually divorced before Ellen was 6. I'm sure the vagaries of my relationship with Greg and the divorce had a significant impact on Ellen. My parents are still married, so I don't pretend to understand this impact as it is not part of my experience. However, I know it made Ellen unhappy and confused.

Neither Greg nor I are perfect parents. I was cutting my teeth on how to be a parent while Ellen was literally cutting her teeth. As my eldest child, she got the full brunt of my inexperience and mistakes. Because I have been a single working mom for the majority of Ellen's life, she also had to shoulder the responsibilities of caring for her brother, Adam and half-sister, Anne. Ellen was essentially a latch-key mom from about the age of 12. Ellen did not want nor enjoy this responsibility and I believe it is partly what caused difficulties in our relationship. That said, Ellen did step up and take the responsibilities I asked of her because she knew I needed help and she believes that is what families do for each other.

Ellen began to show signs of depression in high school. Although Greg and I both suffer from depression, I didn't catch the signs in Ellen. She became more distant and essentially skated under my radar, and I let her. I regret this more than I can express. Ellen later told me it was at this time in her life when she began to feel she was not worthy of being loved. Strangely, it was separation that allowed me to see Ellen more clearly. Ellen went to Western Washington University, so the natural infrequency of our contact made it more apparent to me that Ellen was in trouble. However, she seemed to be coping, so I left it alone. Again, I regret this more than I can say. Ellen began to become isolated. She lived in some pretty tough places: of note is the year she spent on a sailboat with no roommates (berthmates?), had no running water, limited heat, and no access to a shower. She took sponge baths in cold water in the marina's bathroom. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) also impacted her more at this time.



An important turning point was when Ellen started to define herself in terms of what she wants to be as opposed to what she doesn't want to be. Ellen found a community of people with whom she connected and empathized. She found not only that she is worthy of love, but accepted and embraced the love she received. Ellen also found a partner, Sage, and got engaged. This was the first time in Ellen's adult life that she had a sense of financial and emotional stability. I am happy to say that Ellen and I worked to repair our relationship.

Ellen began to thrive. She found jobs that took her outside: working as a ski instructor, a State Park employee, an outdoor classroom instructor. Ellen shines when working with children and introducing them to the outdoors. She becomes vibrantly animated when recounting adventures she led and relationships developed with those kids. In her they find a confidant, a truth-teller and a trusted leader.

I'm sure by now you are wondering "What happened? How did Ellen come to be in my courtroom?" I can't answer to the specifics but again would like to share some context. Ellen had been promoted to be a manager and develop curriculum for the outdoor classroom, which she didn't enjoy as much as being in sessions with kids. Social distancing due to Covid essentially shut down the outdoor education program entirely. In addition, self-quarantining and isolation triggered deeper depression. The negatives began to compound. Ellen and Sage were together for 4 1/2 years; they were engaged for over 3 years. They were to be married in September 2020. Shortly before the wedding, in August, it all fell apart. Ellen went through the emotional wringer of what was essentially a divorce. She had to immediately find new housing. Her emotional and financial needs were intense, and in turmoil. As her family, we were shocked. None of us saw the break-up coming. It must have been that much more scary and disconcerting for Ellen. It is my belief that Ellen was at a nadir last Thanksgiving. I know she was not thinking clearly about her life, and was at an important crossroads. She took a wrong turn. It was a bad choice, and she regrets it.

What I'd like you to know most about Ellen is this: she seeks to be actively engaged in life. She has matured into a person who embraces becoming and seeks opportunities to grow. Ellen does not sit on the sidelines. She throws herself into her passions and figures out how to actually be of real service (not lip service). For example, Ellen obtained increasing levels of expertise in Professional Ski Instructors of America certifications so she could be a better teacher. Another example is that Ellen obtained certification for Wilderness First Responder (80 hours training), and has an additional 20 hours of medical training, and is certified in First Aid/CPR/AED for Adults & Children - all so she could take better care of kids while they are in her care. I'm proud of the way she faces challenges and learns from them. I'm even more glad that she has a kind and empathetic heart and an inquisitive disposition. She is loved deeply by her families of birth and choice.

I know Ellen regrets this decision and the actions she took. This is not because of the

consequences of arrest, trial, or sentencing. Ellen regrets her actions because she did not know that the outcome could potentially cause harm to people or the environment. Ellen regrets that she did not learn about the potential outcomes affecting braking or crossing-guard operations. I avow that had Ellen known there was a potential for harm of any kind, she unequivocally would NOT have made this choice. I further affirm that Ellen will not ever in future act in any way that could harm people or the environment. This act is not who Ellen is, and I know she will not let it define her. I plead with you to consider Ellen as a whole person and not through the narrow lens of this one bad choice.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Brennan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jennifer Brennan



Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez, U.S. District Judge

I am writing this letter on behalf of Ellen Reiche. I worked with Ellen for two years at Wild Whatcom, an outdoor education non-profit. Ellen and I worked together as co-mentors in various programs, taking kids outside and teaching naturalist and wilderness skills. Our goal was to help our participants connect deeper with their human and natural communities through exploration, play, and outdoor activities. While I only know Ellen through work, I was always impressed by how she showed up as her authentic self. This allowed Ellen to quickly connect with her students, relate to their lived experiences, and provide real support to their needs. She not only wasn't afraid to be herself but she also had a true desire to make sure that everyone felt seen and heard, particularly those who otherwise would not have been. I have a specific memory of a time that we were working with a group of 1st-3rd graders and were ending our day with our attitude of gratitude, a time where each person shares out one thing that they are grateful for from the day, and a few of the students started to talk when one particularly shy boy started speaking. Ellen asked the boy sharing his gratitude to pause, apologized for interrupting him, then explained to the whole group that this moment was the most important of them all because this was the moment that we could show each other that we cared. And how do we do that? By listening to each other, just like we hope others will listen to us. It was such a small example of the many ways that Ellen prioritized building healthy socio-emotional skills with her students and created a safe space for all her students.

To be honest, when I heard about what Ellen did, I was overwhelmed with confusion since she is not the type to put another in danger. But I know that Ellen is also incredibly empathic to the struggles of others. I know that she has a deep passion for supporting the Indigenous Communities in the area, just like she has a deep passion for supporting all the kids that she worked with in the field, so my only guess is that this passion is what fueled her actions to support those that she cares about and believes in. She has the desire to give voice to those who are often voiceless and I see her acting as such in this way, but it still doesn't make sense. While I may not fully understand her motivations, I do hope that she has had time to process through them. What I do know is that she has a community of people who love and support her and that these folks have benefitted from the kindness and connection that Ellen has to offer.

Thank you for listening,

Jillian Whitehill

[REDACTED]

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S Martinez,

I have had the pleasure of knowing Ellen Reiche since 2014. We've been roommates, organized events, and built community together. She is one of my nearest and dearest friends and I feel privileged to have been able to grow and learn together with such a caring and compassionate person.

Ellen has been there with me as a friend through some of the most difficult experiences of my life and has never once backed down from an opportunity to help me. In working through various community or interpersonal conflicts, she has shown an incredible ability to always try and hold all the truths of every side at once. Going above and beyond to make sure that every party involved felt seen and heard and had an opportunity to share their side of the story.

I have watched Ellen donate massive amounts of time and resources to helping the local Bellingham homeless community. I know of times where I've seen Ellen leave social engagements to go help one of her homeless friends when they need supplies or food or even medical attention.

She is also a talented and passionate outdoors youth educator. I love hearing about how much she invests in the development and growth of these young people and teaching them how to have a powerful connection to their natural surroundings and local ecosystems. I honestly just find myself regularly blown away by her capacity to care for and foster the betterment of her fellow community members. She is truly a bright light in the lives of myself and so many others.

These reasons and many others are part of why I find that fact that Ellen has been convicted of these offenses so surprising. I find them to be quite out of character for the friend I have grown to know so closely over the last 7 years. I realize that these charges are quite serious, but if there is one thing I know about Ellen, it's that there is no way she would ever do something intentionally with the knowledge that it could potentially cause serious harm or threat to another human life. There is not a single doubt in my mind about this.

I have brought my concerns and questions to Ellen about all this over the last year or so, and I have heard her express many times that she had no idea these sorts of actions could ever potentially cause harm to anyone in any way, and expressed deep regret at the fact that her actions were so dangerous. I truly believe Ellen sees the error of her ways and would never do something like this ever again.

Thank you, Your Honor, for listening and taking into consideration these thoughts on my friend as you consider the appropriate sentencing. I will be here to support my friend through this whole process and however she needs afterwards when she has paid her societal debts.

Respectfully,  
Kimber Kloch

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimber Kloch". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large 'K' and a long, sweeping 'l'.

Email: [REDACTED]  
Cell phone: [REDACTED]

**Layla Masri**



16 November 2021

Honorable Judge Ricardo S Martinez,

I'm writing in support of one of my closest and oldest friends, Ellen Reiche. Ellen and I have been inseparable since we met in 7th grade, bonding over our similar taste in music and our love of the science classes we shared. We had many classes together in middle and high school before we both went on to study at Western Washington University. As we grew up together, our tastes in music changed and we shared fewer and fewer classes, but throughout it all our friendship never faltered.

When I first heard about the investigation, I was surprised. The Ellen I know is compassionate and kind, artistic and outdoorsy, friendly and passionate. In 10th grade, Ellen taught me how to ski with endless patience. In college, she helped teach me how to drive stick shift. If there is one thing I know about Ellen, it is that she would never do anything to put others in harm's way.

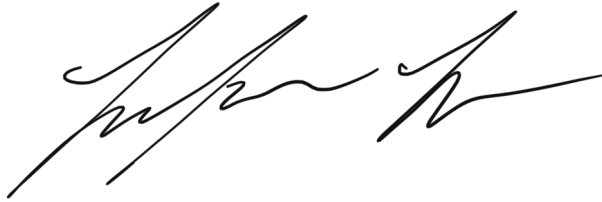
Ellen was one of my two best friends who I asked to stand with me as bridesmaids at my wedding. The morning before the wedding, I was understandably nervous. To help ease my nerves, she led a small, impromptu yoga session for the bridal party. Ellen is in tune with the wellbeing of everyone around her. She is one of the best people I know and I am grateful to call her a friend over the past 15 years.

Though I live in Seattle and Ellen lives in Bellingham, she makes it a priority to stay in touch and visit often. Every time she visits, we take a walk around my neighborhood or to one of the nearby parks and I get to see my surroundings through her eyes – she tells me about the ginkgo trees along the sidewalks that have existed for 200 million years, the dandelions that can be harvested for tea, the snowberries that I had never noticed before. Ellen is not someone who would cause harm to her surroundings. On the contrary, she is one of the most thoughtful and perceptive people I know, and it's proven whenever we spend time together in nature.

Ellen is a good person. I truly believe that she will never be involved in another investigation again. She is a kind, caring person and an excellent friend. Over the last year, she has demonstrated her honesty, cooperation, and good character.

Thank you, Your Honor, for taking my letter into consideration as you deliberate an appropriate sentence. I stand by to offer further support as Ellen may require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Layla Masri', written in a cursive style.

**Layla Masri**

The Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez  
U.S. District Court

Dear Judge Martinez,

I am Ellen Reiche's grandmother on her father's side. All her extended family members on this side of the family are caring and concerned for her during this unhappy time. She has two aunts and 3 uncles and 15 cousins who have strong ties to Ellen since childhood, through shared family events. Although often we have lived far apart, when we are together there is a pleasant, warm family bond.

For a few years during her childhood she and her family lived close enough to me so that I could babysit, help with transportation to daycare and have family get-togethers. From childhood she has been bright, curious and active. She is naturally energetic and loves the outdoors in all seasons. One activity she loved as a toddler was riding in a kiddie trailer behind her dad's bicycle (he is an avid cyclist) beside her little brother. When her dad's sister was married in Washington D.C. many family members traveled to be present. Ellen (age 5 or 6) was part of the wedding party as a junior bridesmaid along with some cousins and some nieces of the groom's family. They wore matching purple velvet dresses and circlets of flowers in their hair.

She has and has had the love and support of both her parents although they have lived separate lives for some time. They have very successfully co-parented Ellen and her brother and half-sister. They have often celebrated holidays and family events together even though they lived in different states. One such event is so memorable to me was a family birthday celebration of my 80th birthday. We gathered in my small Idaho hometown and all stayed in the same motel. Among many other fun things we did, Ellen, several of her girl cousins and I walked around the streets of the town I grew up in. We saw some of the homes I lived in, schools and church I attended and enjoyed visiting the local thrift store together. Although we rarely see each other, we had an exceptionally good time together. We enjoy being together.

As we have spoken together and interacted in different settings she has revealed to me a kind heart, a helpful attitude as well as an even tempered outlook. She has a keen mind, a healthy body and many areas of interest, training and experience to contribute to any community.

Ellen has had the advantage of a good education including college. She has a great work ethic. She is always eager to help me whenever she comes to see me. On one of these visits she cheerfully helped me move a bulky four drawer file cabinet upstairs.

These are some things I hope will be taken into consideration as you make your decision regarding sentencing.

Sincerely,



Karen Clements





October 29, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Martinez,

I am Ellen Reiche's aunt. I've known her since she was born and know her to be a good-hearted person who is passionate about the things that are important to her, including helping others understand and enjoy nature, and standing up for members of minority communities. When I heard that Ellen had been accused (and now convicted) of tampering with a railroad, I was completely shocked. I've never known Ellen to engage in criminal acts and wondered why she would do so now. While Ellen has never discussed with me her reason for committing this crime, my belief is that Ellen's passion for protecting the environment caused her to perform this reckless act that is outside of her character. I know that Ellen would never intentionally harm any person, as she believes all life to be of incredible worth. It is my belief that when she tampered with the railroad, Ellen didn't think it would do more harm than disrupt services. This is a grave crime and I recognize that a punishment should be affixed; however, it is my hope that the fact that Ellen meant no physical harm will have an impact on her sentence.

While I do not regularly communicate with Ellen, I do my best to set a good example for her, as do all members of her large, extended family. No other member of her extended family has been accused of nor committed a crime. We value the laws of our nation and try our best to be good citizens. Please know that we will do our best to continue to set good examples as law-abiding citizens and encourage Ellen to do the same, though most of us live in Utah.

Ellen has many natural gifts: a keen intellect, joy for life, and passion for doing what she thinks is right. I believe that Ellen has the capacity to contribute to society in meaningful ways and I envision a happy life for her in the future.

Thank you for taking time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LeAnne Brennan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

LeAnne Brennan



RECEIVED

NOV 17 2021

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

Nov 10, 2021

Dear Mr Cantor,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my granddaughter, Ellen Brennan Reiche.

Ellen has had many challenges in her life. Though she was raised in a Christian home her young parents divorced when she was a young child. Her mother was the wage earner and did all she could to help Ellen but she did not have an active father figure. In spite of these things Ellen enjoyed school and graduated from university.

Ellen loves nature. She has always loved being in the outdoors cycling, hiking, camping and sailing.

While on probation she received permission to travel to Utah where she enjoyed hiking and camping in Utah's national parks.

During this time she visited and stayed with us overnight. Ellen and I drove to Snow Canyon Park where she thoroughly enjoyed exploring the lava layers. Ellen

CEP/10/01/15

was interested in every plant  
we passed, stopping to use her  
phone app to identify each one. →



page 2

was interested in every plant we passed, stopping to use her phone app to identify each one.

Later that evening Ellen helped her granddad & I put up our telescope to star gaze. That was thoughtful of her and kind.

One of her gifts is that of kindness. Our youngest daughter, Katie, has Down Syndrome and Ellen has always shown interest and been kindly patient with Katie. She has never been rude or unkind to us, her elderly grandparents. We love Ellen.

Thinking of Ellen I realize that money has never been important over purpose. Ellen needs a higher goal than that. She is happy helping others and thrives on that.

Recently I watched a TV show about rangers in a national park & knew immediately that Ellen would do well helping others and showing bravery in a similar situation.

I hope my letters helps those who are tasked with recommending her see more of her wonderful qualities.

Sincerely, her grandmother  
Shirley Brennan



November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

My name is Lily Baumgart and I lived with Ellen Reiche through the time she was apprehended in November 2020 and continued to remain close to her through her trial and are still friends. I first met Ellen back in 2019 at a small New Year's Eve party where we talked for a bit and connected over the fact that we both lived in Bellingham. We talked about nature and when the conversation turned to skiing, she was shocked to find out that I had never been. She immediately offered up resources to get me out to a mountain and learn to ski despite the difficulty that proved for me at the time since I had no car or much money for rentals. This is a great example of how kind hearted a person Ellen is; upon meeting a stranger she gave me resources simply to share her passion with me and encouraged me to have fun.

Throughout our time living in the same house with our two other roommates, she consistently showed up for us whether it was by helping with chores around the house or facilitating inclusive and caring house meetings. Ellen wants to hear everyone's perspective and values each person's reasoning. While she does not prefer to adhere to unnecessary control—chore wheels were a no-go in our house—she does value growth. She is always receptive to new ideas, boundaries, and manages to find ways to be herself while acknowledging and respecting what others need. I often think back to the trip to Utah she planned in early 2020. Ellen is a wonderfully incomprable human who wanders with the wind and under probation that makes this difficult. However, instead of going on her own journey, she took the proper steps in accordance with the rules set before her, respected them, and was able to go on a deep and personal journey in which she was able to learn about and respect both herself and the Earth.

The thing I most admire about Ellen, besides her generosity, is her wealth of knowledge about the natural world and her profound love for teaching others about it. Our house was placed at the bottom of a steep hill where there is a gorgeous arboretum. It was four days before Christmas last year when an unexpected snow hit Bellingham and I was thrilled. So was Ellen. We decided to go for a walk through the arboretum, a place I had only frequented some parts of. As we traversed the snow-covered trails and ducked under boughs that would surely spring snow onto us if we were even to brush against them, Ellen began telling me about all the plants around us. We passed some sword ferns which I had already known to be a pain reliever for the stings of stinging nettle and through the snowberry that for once wasn't popping out but rather blending

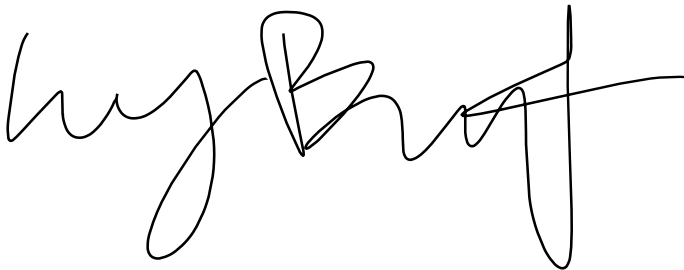
into the snowfall behind. And suddenly, amongst all the wildlife that was settling in for the cold were the light green fronds of licorice fern. She gently bent down to the ground, explaining that while they wouldn't be at their peak flavor until spring, the roots taste of licorice. I was surprised, as I started to chew on the tough root, that it brought forth sweetness and soft fennel flavor. We continued through the forested hills and up to the lookout before heading back to the warmth of our house.

It comes as no surprise to me that I still think about the breadth of knowledge Ellen contains and her willingness to provide it to her community, which I am grateful to be a part of. If there is one person I can think of who has had their community show up for and support them, it is Ellen; and it is because of the way she puts love and respect into the hands of others. I believe that many people will be able to help Ellen stay out of trouble and, for sure, I am one of them. I now live only a few blocks away and am willing and able to hold space for Ellen to air her concerns about issues and find productive ways to address them rather than acting out in harmful ways for both herself and the community. I know that her intentions were ever to cause harm and if she had been made aware of this, she would have taken different paths and she has since informed me of her regrets. I am willing and able to be someone to intervene and make her aware of these destructive potentials if she ever were to want to do something like this again.

Put simplest, Ellen has a deep respect for those around her and their well-being and if she had been in her right mind, aware of the harms this act may have caused, she never would have done what she did.

Sincerely,

Lily

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lily', with a large, stylized initial 'L' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marjorie Keister

November 29th, 2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez, U.S. District Judge,

I've known Ellen since the middle school years. She lived in our neighborhood in Gig Harbor, WA, and is my son's good friend. I was always impressed with her. Not only was she a good student, but she was regularly responsible for caring for her younger brother while her mother, a single parent, worked. Ellen was always kind and respectful of me. I thought her mature for her age. She babysat my son on occasion. She would also take care of our pets and plants when we were away. I was always confident in the care she provided.

I have faith she will overcome the challenges of her current situation. I am confident she will not only survive, but learn, grow, and give back, because that is the person she really is. I still respect, trust, and love Ellen to this day.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Keister

Walla Walla, WA 99362

11/5/2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

Ellen Reiche is my niece, and she is a wonderful, kind, generous, hardworking, considerate, and dependable person. She is also full of gratitude.

These are many instances that can be used to illustrate all these attributes, but I would like to relay to you a simple and small example of her gratitude.

Earlier this year, Ellen made a road trip out to Utah where several of her family members reside, and I was able to spend a few hours with her at that time. Our plan was to meet at a local bakery for breakfast in the Salt Lake City area before she drove 4 hours south to visit her grandparents in St George. Ellen had stayed the night with her aunt LeAnne and they didn't get much sleep, having too much fun visiting, so they were running late and wouldn't be able to meet at the arranged time. I had the baby with me and so we decided to order breakfast and take it to go, instead of waiting for LeAnne and Ellen to meet us. The food was ordered, picked up and I headed over to LeAnne's house with the requested items.

After greeting bear hugs and Auntie kisses, we laid out the food and sat to eat. Ellen thanked me very kindly for the food, for coming, and for bringing baby Ike (she hadn't met him yet). I told her she was more than welcome, and we continued to visit.

Throughout the morning, Ellen continued to express gratitude for the meal, for the visit, for the place to sleep over. Ellen thanked both my sister and I continually.

I was grateful that Ellen was grateful. This simple but genuine act of showing gratitude for little things is one of the many reasons why Ellen is such a wonderful person. To be grateful is such a gift in how we see the world and each other and I am so pleased Ellen has learned this and applies it in her life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Megan Crowley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Megan" and last name "Crowley" clearly distinguishable.

Megan Crowley

A solid black rectangular redaction box.A solid black rectangular redaction box.



Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

Ellen has been my roommate for a year. We and our roommate Emily have enjoyed living together, so we plan on staying together as roommates. Ellen brings energy and enthusiasm to our house, and cares for us just like family. She has shown me so much compassion since I've known her, and I've seen her helping struggling community members and friends with the same care and authenticity. In our city she has strong, meaningful connections from volunteering, and working in child education. I'm heartbroken that Ellen committed this offense. She has a vibrant life in this city, and if she goes to prison the community will lose a generous, hardworking community member.

At home, Ellen has put a lot into making our house feel like a community - Getting us together for dinners, connecting us with our neighbors, and helping us make a plan to stay safe during the pandemic. She really took the initiative with our Covid safety plan. She started a chart to keep track of our Covid bubbles. She got us together for house meetings, and encouraged us to share our worries and set boundaries. It helped us stay safe. Our roommate Emily is immunocompromised, and as a house we managed to keep her protected until she could finally get the vaccine. Ellen makes it feel like home here.

She brings care and energy to our house, and she does the same in her career. Ellen is an extraordinary educator. I've spent time with Ellen while she babysits her friend's daughter Lilly. Going to parks with Ellen and Lilly, I've gotten to see firsthand how Ellen teaches. It's enchanting. Ellen teaches Lilly practical and fascinating things about the wildlife we see. She builds Lilly's confidence, and encourages her to be adventurous. She's told me about some of the kids she has taught as an outdoor educator, and it's obvious that Ellen loves them, and loves her work. Ellen has such a talent for teaching and connecting with kids, which I think greatly benefits their families and the community.

Ellen is an amazingly compassionate and generous person. She happened to be there for the worst mental health crisis I've ever had, and she helped me through it like no one else could have. The night after I got my second Covid vaccine, I had an awful panic attack. I was terrified, and I couldn't handle it on my own. Thinking about who could help me in that moment, I decided Ellen was the person I trusted most. I felt awful about waking her up in the middle of the night, but when I did she was totally patient and understanding. She invited me to sit down in her room. She listened to me, and talked me through it. After half an hour, she offered to go on a walk with me. She took a long walk with me at 2:00 in the morning, just to help me calm down. We had been roommates for less than a year, and still she was willing to do so much. That's the kind of person Ellen has been since I've known her. After that frightening experience, I have been scared of slipping back into a panic attack. Ellen is an important part of my support network in case that does happen. Having her here makes me feel safe and stable, and I'm worried about losing her.

I don't know what made Ellen commit this offense in the first place. I do know that she has incredibly strong friendships, and heartfelt connections in our community. There are plenty of people that care about, and rely on Ellen, who will be a force against her making such a misguided decision again.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Morgan A. Call

Nathan Drake

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

December 6, 2021

To the Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

My name is Nathan Drake, and this letter is to attest to the character of Ellen Reiche in order that the decisions regarding her sentencing are more completely informed, and that the importance of her role in her community is illuminated. First, I will give a few details about myself so that you may measure for yourself the weight of my statements.

I hold a Masters degree in teaching, and have 6 years of professional experience as an educator. Primarily I have taught public high school environmental science and chemistry. I have also volunteered with community enrichment programs, substituted early grades, and worked with an outdoor educational nonprofit called Wild Whatcom. With my professional learning communities, I have endeavored to make trauma-informed practices and restorative justice part of my praxis. I have collaborated with a wide range of professional educators, some of whom are nationally recognized as the top of their field. Based on these experiences, I must say that Ellen Reiche is among the most compassionate, dedicated, talented and reflective educators I have had the privilege to work with.

I became close with Ellen at Wild Whatcom, where we co-mentored elementary and middle grade students in outdoor experiential learning. There, I witnessed Ellen gracefully scaffold and actualize lessons that ranged from wilderness survival to social-emotional learning. I know first-hand how she is able to consistently to bring the philosophy of whole-child education into real practice. We have remained close friends since we have each moved on to other careers, and I have continued to work with her as she prepares lessons for a high school enrichment course. Ellen exemplifies what it means to be reflective and improve oneself and one's craft. The educational roles that I have known Ellen to fill are most often unusual, and demand a synthesis of diverse skills and priorities.

All of this puts Ellen into a special class of individual, but perhaps a more significant measure of her character is how her relationships with her students impact them for the positive. I have known students to become more self-reflective because of her role-modeling. I have known students to grow better at assessing risk and danger in the wilderness, and to change their behavior patterns accordingly. I have known students to become more accepting and loving of themselves and of one another in direct response to her influence, and in lasting ways. I have known students to value their own capacity to learn, to assess their skills, and to set priorities for their own growth because of the ways that Ellen has interacted with them. I wish with all my heart that Ellen continues to grow as an educator. All my experience with her demonstrates that she continually reflects on her capacity to change the world and to use her powers for good, and furthermore that she inspires those around her to do the same.

It is therefore my considered opinion that for this community to be without Ellen will be a loss. I ask that you consider these aspects of her character and the value her presence brings to her community as you make your decision in her sentencing.

With gratitude for your time and consideration,  
Nathan Drake



Dear Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I have known Ellen Reiche both in a professional capacity and as a friend for the last three years, and I write this character reference in hopes of conveying just what a compassionate, caring person she is. Thank you for taking these words into consideration.

I met Ellen in 2018 when I began working at Wild Whatcom, a Bellingham-based environmental education nonprofit at which she was already employed. As someone new to the organization, I looked to Ellen as a mentor and role model, and early on was struck by the empathy she brought to each interaction with other staff and the children who participate in our programs. Ellen has a wonderful ability to see each person as an individual with unique needs and importance. The empathy and compassion she brings to every human encounter is an inspiring thing to see in anybody, but especially in an educator, and I found myself resolving to try to be more like Ellen in my own interactions with the children with whom we work at Wild Whatcom.

Ellen and I were both field mentors, meaning we worked with groups of children signed up for Wild Whatcom programs including our weekend Explorers Club and summer day camps. We were often assigned to work together, meaning I have a strong firsthand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities Ellen faced each day in her work. Time and again, I saw her help kids learn to connect with the natural world and gain competence in skills Wild Whatcom teaches such as wood carving, emergency shelter building, and navigating with map and compass. I came to think of Ellen as a patient instructor, a supportive mentor, and someone with a rare ability to ensure each student's physical and emotional needs were met.

An example will help illustrate what I mean: one day, toward the end of a weeklong summer camp, Ellen came in to substitute for my regular co-mentor. One of the students in the camp, a middle school-aged boy, had been struggling all week to fit in with the other children and muster enthusiasm for what we were doing. He often showed up for camp downcast and lethargic, and I sensed he might be struggling with issues as home. Despite other children trying to include him in games and activities, he simply could not seem to come out of the funk of depression. This changed on the day Ellen worked with us; that morning, she began involving the students in a storytelling game, and to my surprise this boy who had struggled so much joined in. To my still greater surprise, he became enthusiastic and his eyes lit up in a way I had not seen all week. At the end of the day he was talking and laughing with other children, all thanks to Ellen's ability to involve him in something he found fun and interesting. This may be a particularly good example of the caring touch Ellen brings to her work as an educator, but it is far from a unique one. I can call to mind many similar instances where she was able to bring students out of their defensive shells and help them have a good time outdoors.

Everything I know about Ellen tells me she is a caring and moral person who would never intentionally do harm to another or put anyone in danger. When I learned she had gotten into legal trouble I was shocked, because the things I heard seemed so out of character for her. I believe that if Ellen has been involved in activities that could have caused others harm, it could



only be because she did not understand the potential consequences or got swept up in a scheme bigger than she realized and whose implications she did not fully grasp. Ellen, a young adult in her early twenties, may have exhibited naivete or poor judgement, but I am positive she has learned a lesson. I know she poses no danger to the people around her and that the actions which got her into trouble with the law were an aberration.

After her arrest, I reached out to Ellen and got in touch, not as a co-worker but as a friend. The conversations we had left me more convinced than ever that she deeply repented any action capable of causing harm to anyone, and that there was no risk of her making any such mistake again. Most of my interactions with Ellen have involved the two of us working with children for whose safety and wellbeing we were jointly responsible, and I can say as both a friend and a professional that I would unhesitatingly trust her in that role again today.

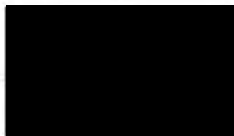
I hope my words above have gone some way toward capturing what a good, kind, and caring person Ellen Reiche is, and showing that any illegal activity she was engaged in was both out of character and not something with any danger of being repeated. Ellen is someone with immense gifts to offer the world, and with the support of friends and colleagues I know she will accomplish many good things. I have seen her excel as an educator, and I have every expectation that she will be an asset to any organization she works for in the future. I plan to stay in contact with Ellen and offer any support I can as she embarks on the next chapter of her life and puts the mistakes of the past behind her.

Thank you, Your Honor, for considering what I have conveyed of who Ellen Reiche is as a person as you deliberate on the appropriate sentence in her case.

Respectfully,



Nick Engelfried





Nov 21, 2021

To the Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I am happy to write this letter in support of Ellen Reiche's character. I have known Ellen since April 2018 when she joined the staff of Wild Whatcom, a Bellingham-based nonprofit where I work as the Operations Director. As a Mentor, Ellen's role was to educate and to create connections between children and the natural world. Although Ellen and I know one another primarily as colleagues, I feel lucky to know her and to have had the opportunity to learn from her.

The Ellen I know is thoughtful, reflective, and principled. She seeks to understand, support, and amplify unheard voices, be they those of quiet co-workers, Indigenous people or children. Two meaningful examples of how these traits appeared in our working interactions come to mind.

The first was the time and research she devoted to educating her fellow staff about the history, cultural significance and opportunities for us to assist with the 2019 Paddle to Lummi event. Despite living in Bellingham for many years, I had only passing familiarity with the canoe journey, which is hosted annually by different Salish Sea tribes. In the months leading up to the canoe journey and potlatch, Ellen participated in preparations and regularly kept the staff updated on what she was learning. From helping us craft our first land acknowledgement and gathering resources for us to read, to sharing Coast Salish words for plants and introducing us to tribal members, Ellen sought to build respectful and joyful connections between cultures.

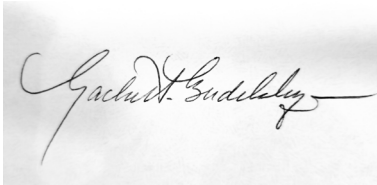
The second example came after a fundraising meeting that occurred in the office near where she was working. We were brainstorming ideas for approaching businesses that might be willing to act as sponsors. She was silent during the meeting, and later, after gathering her thoughts, she gently shared that we would benefit from considering where and from whom we sought funding because of their stance on values that were part of our mission. What she shared was important. What made it effective was the way she shared it; as an invitation to listen to our better angels instead of an invective against our plans. Her thoughts reframed how we approached fundraising going forward.

Ellen is playful, creative, and funny and she is passionate about connecting people to one another and the beauty of the natural world. She is honest and forthright. As a Mentor, she is well trained in how to keep those in her charge safe. The Ellen I know would never intentionally hurt anyone. She went out of her way to make sure those around her felt safe emotionally as well as physically. Her involvement in the crime for which she has been convicted does not fit with what I know of her character and

I can only imagine that it was an aberrant lapse of judgment. What I do know is that Ellen is a good, thoughtful, and caring person.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I hope that it gives you another perspective on Ellen's character and that it is helpful as you consider her sentence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rachel Budelsky", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Rachel Budelsky



11/13/21

Honorable Judge Ricardo S Martinez,

Ellen Reiche was my partner for 4 years, from 2016 to 2020. Our relationship was one of support, adventure, and mutual care and though we are no longer together romantically, we have continued a very deep and loving friendship. We consider each other family and I know that Ellen will always be there for me in times of need. If I were to describe Ellen in three words, it would be genuine, good-hearted, and inspired.

When I say Ellen is genuine, I mean that she moves through the world in an honest, clear-eyed, and humble way. Ellen has a profound sense of wonder for the world around her that shines through her daily interactions, her career, and her close relationships. Like a child discovering things for the first time, Ellen treats every gift from nature, funny remark from a kid, beautiful piece of art, and long conversation with a friend with an authentic level of enthusiasm and fascination. She is curious and kind, which is part of what makes her such a fantastic educator and caretaker for kids. These qualities also make her a wonderful friend and community member. Ellen is always ready to learn something new, listen to elders and those of different backgrounds, and share her skills and knowledge with those who ask.

Ellen is good-hearted and fair in the way that she approaches communication and conflict resolution. I believe that the way we have transitioned our relationship from a romantic partnership to a familial friendship is a great testament to her ability to remain open-hearted and level-headed in the face of conflict. She is known as a very helpful and grounded person who can mediate conflict and foster unity within the community. If ever I am in need of advice about how to rectify a negative situation, I always turn to her guidance and she always gives me compassionate yet honest feedback. Ellen's presence in the Bellingham community is necessary, positive, and valued.

Ellen is an inspired person who lives a vibrant life full of adventure, passion, and good values. In the time that I have known her, I have watched Ellen dream up and go after a life that marries her love of nature and her kinship with children with her desire to teach, explore, and learn. She sets attainable yet ambitious goals for herself and then works to meet them. Ellen is uncompromising in her values and operates with a very strong moral compass. She is introspective and self-aware, and she is constantly searching for ways to better herself and improve the lives of those around her. When something goes wrong, Ellen is humble and learns from her life challenges. Although she has strong convictions, she is always open-minded and willing to grow from her mistakes.

Ellen is someone who I look up to and turn to in times when I need love and counsel. She is also someone with which I choose to share my joyous times and celebrations. I hold her very dear, and I know that the rest of the community does as well. I am due to have my first child in April, and Ellen and I have planned for her to be a very large role in the raising of my child. I hope to have her sound wisdom, sense of wonder, and gentle spirit as a constant presence in

my child's life. I trust Ellen, I love her very much, and I truly believe that the world is better for having her in it.

Warmly,  
Sage Appel



10/29/2021

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez, U.S. District Judge,

My name is Simon Monk. I am a poet currently studying at Evergreen after taking a medical leave from UC Berkeley, which happened when I became mobility impaired and chronically ill. Ellen is my good friend. She is a uniquely good friend to me and part of my support system and I feel so lucky to have happened into her life by her responding to my poetry. I have three separate moments and stories to share with you about her.

1. A few months ago, I went through a nightmare of a breakup. A couple days before I was about to undergo heart surgery, my ex was reluctantly moving out and having a mental breakdown, and the moving out seemed like it might not happen. The stress of this literally could have killed me. Ellen came over on very short notice and stayed the night with me and made sure my ex left and got help. It was a long drive and a long night and she just slept on a sleeping bag on the ground so that I could feel more comfortable. She held it all together that night, and helped explain things to upset neighbors in the morning. She somehow managed to not set off my ex even further and at the same time actually get me to be able to laugh by the end of it. I don't know anyone else who could pull that off, and I don't know anyone else who would try.
2. Ellen, although not herself a poet, is the person I trust sharing my poetry with first. I don't always even need to ask her for specific feedback. I read one to her on Facetime and I can see it effecting her in real time. She has such honest and authentic reactions and a transparency that I deeply appreciate. She has cried on multiple occasions as I read because of words I wrote, which is such a gift to me, as a writer and a person. I wrote her a poem a couple months ago, a kind of platonic love poem.
3. Ellen once pushed my wheelchair through a park and could tell me about every plant. There was one single plant in the entire park she didn't know immediately but she figured it out. And there was this other plant, one of those kinds that sticks to everything, that I told Ellen I hated. She went on to tell me why it mattered and how it stuck to things in the same way that a lizard can seem to defy gravity when it climbs. I've heard people use the expression that someone "couldn't hurt a fly"—Ellen couldn't hurt, or even badmouth, a weed.

The way that Ellen talks about nature and the kids she teaches about nature makes me wish I could have been one of those kids, having someone like that in my life, growing up. Seeing the park through her eyes, with a kind of near-spiritual wonder and respect for what I didn't know, I did feel a bit like a kid.

Ellen has a dream of starting her own outside school. I believe in her so much, and know that the kids and families she has worked with love her so much, that I have pushed her to let me make her a website and just get started with the built-in base of clients she has—but understandably, she has wanted to wait to see what her sentence is before launching a new business. When she starts her school, and expands on doing the irreplaceable work she does with kids, I know that our community will be better for it.

Thank you for reading my letter.



To the Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

11/5/21

Thank you for reading this statement in support of Ellen B. Reiche. It is my intention to speak genuinely of what I know about Ellen as a person and work colleague. I hope also to provide insight into the professional events prior to their arrest and the positive effects of their mentorship on Whatcom County youth.

Ellen and I met in the spring of 2018 when they were hired for the position of youth outdoor educator for Wild Whatcom, the organization that I work for. My first impressions of them were that of a thoughtful, gentle person who had a talent for connecting deeply with children. Over the two years that Ellen and I were at the same organization, we worked together in multiple areas: in the field with children, side by side in managerial positions, and in intensive medical training courses. For their last year at the organization, I was Ellen's direct supervisor.

Though clearly passionate about working with children, Ellen struggled with many aspects of their administrative responsibilities. They were prompted very quickly to the role of Assistant Program Coordinator and then a year later, Assistant Program Manager. The added responsibilities of this management role created difficulty and stress for Ellen. Although Ellen was still performing well in their role as a field educator, it became apparent that their management position was not a good fit. After five months in this new role, we began a job performance review to assess whether Ellen should remain in their position as Assistant Manager. In August 2020, Ellen stepped down from management and went back to working primarily in the field with children.

At this time, Ellen was also experiencing several other difficult life changes and the transition back to the field did not go well. After three months of falling short of their new role's expectations, Ellen was dismissed from the organization in early November 2020. The cause for their dismissal was poor performance in the realms of communication, timeliness in tasks, and preparedness. The news of their arrest a month later was incredibly shocking to our workplace, the children that Ellen worked with, and the larger community. The crime that they were convicted of is incredibly out of character and I still find it hard to wrap my head around it. Only knowing that this occurred immediately after many months of cascading life crises, both professional and personal, has helped me to come to terms with their arrest and conviction.

I was deeply saddened and surprised at the actions that Ellen was convicted of because they have always shown such devotion to the well being of their community. Though Ellen struggled administratively at Wild Whatcom, their care for children and co-workers was always evident. After their arrest, many of the children and families that they worked with reached out in their support. Even a year later, children still tell me how much they miss Ellen and how fantastic of a mentor they were. It is my firm belief, rooted in years of experience working alongside them in the pursuit of community-centered education, that Ellen would never do anything to knowingly put the people in their community in danger.

Ellen is a person of incredible passion, high ideals, and a sense of stewardship of their community- human, animal, and land. They are deeply connected with their local, natural environment and seek refuge in quiet places in the forest or by the sea. In the time that we

knew each other, Ellen cared very much for environmental causes, LGBTQ+ rights, and connecting youth with their local natural places. They are an active, positive, and valued member of the community. If given the chance, I know that Ellen will take this life redirection to continue giving back to their community in their normal gentle and meaningful way.

My gratitude,

Stormie Romero

[REDACTED]

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stormie Romero". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial 'S' and a stylized 'R'.

Dear Honorable Judge Ricardo S. Martinez,

I am Ellen's aunt. I was in the hospital at her birth and was her nanny for the first years of her life. Though I don't get to visit her often, I know her well.

Ellen has a passion for people and the environment. She is also a natural teacher. She often sees things from a different perspective and strives to relate that perspective to others. Every job Ellen has held has been in guest services, environmental, or both. She loves every aspect of nature and desires to share her love and knowledge with those around her.

I am a river guide and have taken Ellen as extra crew on two Grand Canyon river trips. She hadn't spent much time in the desert before, and was unprepared for the extreme heat and its effect, especially in August. The first day of the first trip she became very dehydrated, a common occurrence for many guests. She had a rough night getting back on the right side of hydration. The next morning, she pleaded with me to tell the rest of the group how terrible it was to get dehydrated and how to keep from having the terrible afternoon and night she had experienced. Though she spent 20 more sweltering days in the canyon, she never repeated her mistake.

Last year Ellen took my husband and I on a hike near Mt. Baker. On the drive to the trailhead, we saw a beautiful glen that I asked to stop and explore. She spent an hour in the bracken searching for and identifying mushrooms for us. She had equal excitement hiking us up the valley and, when we weren't able to reach the ridge, she showed no disappointment. Rather, as we turned around and headed back to the car, she continued enthusiastically informing us of our surroundings.

I don't know the beginnings of how Ellen got herself into this situation. I'm not sure she knows. I know she understands the gravity of what she's done and will not repeat it. She will be a good citizen advocate, helping others direct their love and connection to the environment in healthy, productive ways. Every experience she and I have shared has shown her to be a loving, caring, and positive individual. She is an important member of my family.

Thank you for your time. I hope my thoughts have helped you understand Ellen's character and the impact she has on others as you deliberate a sentence.

Respectfully,

Veronica Haymond